

**MORE  
THAN**  
*a shelter.*

# RAISING UP

THE GOOD NEWS OF HELPING UP MISSION



## A Sober Christmas

James, pictured left, remembers a Christmas spent alone in a bar in Texas, a stark reminder of how low his life had sunk. “I was unhappy,” he says. “I had run far from God and thought He was done with me. I had to work the night before, so I would not be with family and friends. I remember the booth, the music, and the loneliness. I was ashamed. I did not have anyone to reach out to.” Jobless, carless, and on the edge of homelessness, he was struggling with alcohol and a decades-long dependence on prescription drugs that began with debilitating anxiety.

“I first heard about Helping Up Mission while looking at shelter programs in Texas. My cousin Martha, who worked at Helping Up Mission, recognized my struggles and asked me to look at it because she thought it would work. She never told me what to do—she just supported me and prayed I’d get help. One text she sent me said, ‘Put faith over fear and fight.’ At that time, I was trying to detox on my own from Xanax and alcohol while fasting. I felt like I could die. My brother drove me to Helping Up Mission, and I felt safe for the first time in a long while.”

“A couple of months later, I celebrated my first sober

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Christmas in a long time. I never knew how to get help before this, and even though I was disconnected from my old life, I didn't feel alone. I felt safe. I wasn't worried. I told my family I was alive. Martha even came by to serve during the holidays, and I got to spend Christmas with my family, sober, for the first time in decades. After a year of working hard on myself, one day at a time, I graduated from the Spiritual Recovery Program. My brother, my sister-in-law, and Martha and her husband were all there."

**"This Christmas, I'm looking forward to reconnecting with more friends and family, building deeper sober connections."**

"Recently, I was hired as the Spiritual Life Coordinator. I had been wondering how I was going to give back—I was a client, and now I get to be someone who can empathize, listen, and walk with men through their recovery one day at a time. I want to help them build their lives patiently, just as I am continuing to do. This Christmas, I'm looking forward to reconnecting with more friends and family, building deeper sober connections. I'm finally James again. I know I'm not done on my journey, but I look forward to becoming a better man, one day at a time. To the donors who make this all possible—thank you. Because of you, hope is real, and lives are being restored."



## Hope Restored. Lives Rebuilt.

Daniel's Monthly Update

### Dear HUM Family,

In this Advent season, I am reminded of the hope we have from a Higher Power. At Helping Up Mission (HUM), we believe our Higher Power came to this earth over 2,000 years ago as Immanuel, "God with us", to bring hope to a lonely and lost world.

This same God met James in a lonely bar in his desperation and looking for help in the depths of addiction. He used a family member to encourage him to reach out to Helping Up Mission and he entered our one-year Spiritual Recovery Program. We hope his story inspires you and demonstrates how hope is being restored and lives rebuilt.

Your support of Helping Up Mission makes the "Sober Christmas" that James celebrates this year possible. From our HUM team, we wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with hope.

By His Grace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "K. Daniel Stoltzfus". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**K. Daniel Stoltzfus, CEO**  
Helping Up Mission

**<sup>14</sup> All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').**

Isaiah 7:14 NLT

# Focus on Recovery

Mike Rallo – Director of Spiritual Life

This Christmas season, James' feature story inspires me. Long ago, angels told Mary, "Do not fear," because God was with her. Her life changed forever as she carried the child who would save the world.

"I was so filled with fear," said James, now a graduate and part of our Spiritual Life team. "For years I woke up anxious and went to bed anxious. It was exhausting." Today, fear no longer overwhelms him.

Anxiety shaped James' life for years, as it does for many at HUM. "When you're scared all the time, you want relief," he said. "And that's where I kept falling."

Step by step, James learned hope. "I'm learning



to trust that God is with me," he said. "That changes everything." Now he lifts others up, making this Christmas especially meaningful.

# What an Incredible Day!

This past November, we hosted our 2nd Helping Up Mission Alumni Homecoming. Over 120 alumni and their families joined us to celebrate life transformation. Guests enjoyed plenty of BBQ, inspiring words from speakers, and Pastor Gary Byers, former Deputy Director, flew in from New Mexico to address the crowd. Special thanks to the Alumni Committee, and a big thank you to You for Changing Lives!





## Mindful Giving

Family, we've made it easier than ever to meet urgent needs at Helping Up Mission. Our new partnership with **Mindful Giving** streamlines the process, allowing you to view real-time requests and give directly where help is needed most. Together, we can quickly provide essentials and hope to the men, women, and children we serve.

### To Donate Urgent Needs

[helpingupmission.org/mindfulgiving](https://helpingupmission.org/mindfulgiving)



## A Heart to Serve Susan K.

Five years before her son Richard entered the Mission, Susan Kupper wrote him a letter filled with pain and hope, ending with "I will not give up on you." Richard graduated in 2012 and lived sober for several years before relapsing and passing away.

Instead of running from the grief, Susan chose to serve. She now volunteers every month at dinner and is known as the salad lady. "I must stand on a box," she said, "and I smile and say something nice to each man. They smile back and it helps me so much to be here." Susan also speaks in class, sharing a mom's heart. "Every time I share, I gain some healing as well."



Thank you, Susan for sharing your smiles with us.

# Merry Christmas

May the light of Christ bring hope to every heart this season as we celebrate his birth with gratitude and joy. May peace guide our days and love shape our actions as we share this blessed time together.



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**410-675-HELP (4357)**  
**[helpingupmission.org](https://helpingupmission.org)**

## Our Mission

To transform the lives of and restore hope to those suffering from addiction and poverty by harnessing the power of faith, science and community.

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